

"IF I WERE A RICH MAN."

This is an expression we are all familiar with. Just what one would do, under given circumstances, no one knows; but we all have our ideas about the matter. What we mean by the term "rich" we will let the reader determine for himself. For my part, "if I were a rich man," there are two things above all else that I would do; namely, disseminate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and educate worthy poor boys and girls who want an education and are unable of themselves to secure it.

To do the first I would secure the services of a Presbyterian minister to travel over the Southern Assembly and expound to the people the Gospel as taught by John Calvin, comprehended in what is known as "The Five Points of Calvinism." This man's work would consist in preaching ten sermons in each community. Five of them would be theological sermons, preached in such style that the average intelligence might comprehend them; and five of them applying the principles of Calvinism to everyday life.

Without going into details, I will now give some good reasons why I would invest my money thus: first, because of the "love of truth." If Calvinism was not the truth, it would have been dead and buried so long ago that the place thereof would know it no more; for the world is against it, the flesh (carnal mind) is against it, the devil is against it, and a part of the Christian Church is against it. Jesus is the truth, and he taught the doctrines we call Calvinism, as no man ever taught them. Paul, the champion missionary of the world, whom Jesus called and sanctioned, whom all denominations constantly quote, found his most apt scholar in the person of John Calvin. This man, like all other great men, is now in a process of resuscitation. And what is it that resuscitates him? To ask the question is to answer it; for his name is a synonym of the Gospel he preached.

The second reason for doing this work is as follows: first, Calvinism is the avowed enemy of all of the false "isms" of the world. Romanism and Atheism have no greater enemy than Calvinism. We think, and think rightly, if the present is to be judged by the past, that we see in Calvinism a solution of the perplexing problems that today are vexing the nations of the earth. The quicker this work is undertaken the better; for while we are waiting, this country of ours is swelling in population from all parts of the world, and they are bringing with them their false religions. We have no space to give the growth of false religions in our country. Suffice it to say that hundreds of heathen temples are already on American soil. The condition is alarming! Meanwhile false notions of the Deity are springing up everywhere, and the tendency toward Unitarianism is so marked that it does not require the eye of a prophet to forecast the future. The religious world is in a fever, and we know of no fever-powder that will reduce the temperature as Calvinism.

The third reason for spending fortunes in this direction, is that Calvinism is a tree of divine truth whose fruits have been tested in every sphere of life. It is high time for some of us to read and to reread Dr.

Smith's "Creed of Presbyterianism," in which book we see the glory of our faith and the leaven of influence as a political, moral and evangelical force. As to the first, let me say that we Americans are a foolish people; for we glory in a country of religious and civil liberty; but forget that the flower of government finds its roots in the black, but rich, soil of Calvinism. Foolish as it may sound to some, nevertheless, it is true that the life of our republic is dependent upon the principles of Calvinism for its stability. In proportion as these principles die in that proportion we behold liberty being transmuted into license.

In the Revolutionary war for American independence Calvinism created the spirit of freedom, and saved the country from depotism. The Arminian churches then, as they will in the future, proved a dismal failure. As a moral force we invite your attention to the countries where its principles dominated the minds of the people. It made Holland a paradise and raised Scotland from the dead. As an evangelical force it is only necessary to call your attention to the Reformation of 1517 as a single specimen of its abiding influence. As an evangelical force Calvinism has never been surpassed; for the greatest revivals that have ever swept over any community were born in the home of this theology. As illustrations of this turn your eyes back to the day of Pentecost, to the Reformation, to the New England States where Edwards preached. Our Church has been and always will be the "theological sun around which other denominations" will revolve and receive light and life, if we are faithful to our charge. I would venture a fortune in this way because "By their fruits ye shall know them." If there was ever an age when people stood in need of strong Gospel preaching this is that age.

It might be asked, "Why do this work when all Presbyterian ministers believe this Gospel?" Whether it is believed or not, we are unable to answer; but this much is certain, it is not preached as a general thing. I hope that the Assembly will so order it and, if necessary, employ that man to do this specific work. If not, I would spend a fortune this way, "if I were rich." The writer has seen a congregation spellbound as they listened to a sermon of that type. Our Presbytery has been engaged in doing this kind of work, and the churches were packed with attentive hearers. The general verdict of the people is this: "Give us some more of the same kind of preaching—we never yet heard the like."

Now, if I had any money left after doing this work, it would be spent in seeking and educating boys and girls who are willing, but not able. Among that number we might expect to find a few Thornwells, who themselves will become champions of Calvinism.

In conclusion, if I should be speaking to some rich man, let me urge you by saying that this kind of work will result in the greatest good to the homes, the State, the Church, and will be the most lasting monument that one can erect for time and eternity.

"Truth crushed to the ground will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers."

E. C. B.